

Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DOE-11
SOE-02 ACDA-12 OMB-01 NRC-05 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01
COME-00 DOTE-00 INT-05 DOEE-00 TRSE-00 /108 W
-----097817 140815Z /17

P R 140626Z MAR 78
FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4325
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMCONSUL SYDNEY
AMCONSUL BRISBANE
AMCONSUL PERTH
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
USS QUEENFISH
SECDEF WASHDC
CNO WASHDC
SECNAV WASHDC
CINCPAC
CINCPACFLT
COMSUBPAC PEARL HARBOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L MELBOURNE 0391

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E O 11652 GDS
TAGS PINT MILI ICLR AS
SUBJ: USS QUEENFISH VISIT TO MELBOURNE - SUMMARY REPORT

REF A CANBERRA 1161 060537Z MAR 78 NOTAL B MELBOURNE 0347 NOTAL

1. SUMMARY: USS QUEENFISH (SSN-651) SAILED ON SCHEDULE AT 0900
MARCH 10TH AFTER CONCLUDING A VERY SUCCESSFUL FIVE-DAY VISIT TO
MELBOURNE. THIS VISIT DEMONSTRATED ONCE AGAIN THE NOW WELL-KNOWN
HOSPITALITY AND FRIENDLINESS OF THE VAST MAJORITY OF AUSTRALIANS
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TOWARDS USN SHIPS - BOTH NPWS AND CONVENTIONAL - AND SAW ONLY TWO
VERY LIMITED AND COMPLETELY NON-DISRUPTIVE ANTI-VISIT DEMONSTRATIONS.
WE BELIEVE THIS VISIT MARKS THE BEGINNING OF AN ERA IN WHICH VISITS
OF NPWS WILL BE CONSIDERED TO BE RELATIVELY ROUTINE OCCURRENCES
WHICH, THOUGH CERTAINLY STIMULATING PUBLIC INTEREST (AS INDEED DID
THE RECENT VISIT OF THE LUXURY PASSENGER LINER QE2), WILL NOT PRE-
CIPITATE PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE VISIT WHICH COULD HAVE

SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON THE SAFETY OF THE SHIP OR EASY MOVEMENT OF LIBERTY PARTIES. END SUMMARY.

2. QUEENFISH SAILED INTO STATION PIER ON PORT PHILIP BAY AMID AN ESCORT OF SMALL BOATS FROM SEVERAL YACHT CLUBS AND THE AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEER COAST GUARD. ALL BOATS WE COULD OBSERVE WERE FRIENDLY; ONE WAS PLAYING "ANCHORS AWEIGH" ON ITS HAILER. A SMALL PROTEST DEMONSTRATION TOOK PLACE AS QUEENFISH ARRIVED BUT WAS VIRTUALLY LOST IN LARGE CROWD OF ONLOOKERS. AMBASSADOR ALSTON AND CONSUL GENERAL POPPLE AND HIS STAFF WERE ON HAND TO GREET SHIP AND BRIEF CO CDR MILO DAUGHTERS, II ON ARRANGEMENTS. DUE TO PRESENCE LARGE NUMBER MEDIA REPS ON PIER, POST'S PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER SUGGESTED IMPROMPTU PRESS CONFERENCE BE CALLED, CO AGREED AND SEVERAL USEFUL INTERVIEWS AND TV FOOTAGE WERE OBTAINED. (MEDIA COVERAGE THROUGHOUT THE VISIT WAS INTENSE AND GENRALLY POSITIVE AND CONCENTRATED LARGELY ON "HUMAN INTEREST" AND FEATURE TYPE MATERIAL.POST'S PAO PREPARING MEDIA ANALYSIS SEPARATELY.) UNION OPPOSITION TO THIS VISIT WAS DRAMATICALLY LESS THAN THAT TOWARD THE TRUXTUN VISIT(SEPT 1976) WHEN STATION PIER WAS "BLACKED" DURING THE WHOLE VISIT (IE, NO UNION ACTIVITY PERMITTED) AND THE ENTIRE PORT OF MELBOURNE WAS CLOSED FOR ONE DAY. IN THIS VISIT, THERE WAS NO "BLACKING" OF THE PIER AND AT LEAST ONE UNION IN FACT DID PROVIDE SERVICE TO THE SHIP (IE, GARBAGE PICKUP). SOME UNIONS, HOWEVER, DID STATE THEY WOULD NOT PROVIDE SERVICE TO SHIP INCLUDING THE WATERSIDE WORKERS AND SEAMEN'S UNIONS. THIS CAUSED NO RPT NO INCONVENIENCE TO THE SHIP.

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3. BALANCE OF VISIT CONSISTED OF PROTOCOL CALLS AND SOCIAL AND SPORTING ACTIVITIES AND POST-ORGANIZED VIP TOURS OF SHIP IN ADDITION TO ADDITIONAL MEDIA COVERAGE. VISIT COINCIDED WITH MELBOURNE'S ANNUAL "MOOMBA" FESTIVAL, A TWO-WEEK LONG MARDI-GRAS-TYPE FREE PUBLIC CARNIVAL, WHICH ADDED GREATLY TO CITY'S USUAL ENTERTAINMENT FOR CREW.

4. ON AFTERNOON MARCH 9, APPROX 60 PROTESTERS APPEARED AT PIER IN APPARENT LAST-CHANCE BID TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR STRENGTH. IN SOME SCUFFLES WITH MORE-THAN-ADEQUATE NUMBER OF POLICEMEN, PAINT WAS THOWN AND SIX ARRESTS MADE. THIS WAS ONLY INCIDENT WHICH MIGHT BE CONSIDERED TO HAVE MARRED VISIT AND, IN ANY CASE, DID NOT HAVE ANY DISRUPTIVE EFFECT ON SHIP OR CREW. QUEENFISH SAILED ON SCHEDULE AT 0900 MARCH 10 WITH HER TWO RAN SHIPS AND SEVERAL POLCIE AND OTHER CRAFT IN ESCORT.

5. COMMENT: POST AGREES WITH EMBASSY'S ASSESSMENT (REF A) THAT THIS VISIT MARKS TURNING POINT IN PUBLIC AND MEDIA REACTION TO NPW VISITS. SEVERAL FACTORS SHOULD BE HIGHLIGHTED IN THIS REGARD. (A) RECENT GALLUP PUBLIC OPINION POLL INDICATED THAT MAJORITY OF AUSTRALIAN FAVOR NPW VISITS (59.3 O/O FOR; 18.2 O/O AGAINST; 22.5 O/O

UNDECIDED;) (B) RECENTLY FORMULATED OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS (ACTU) POLICE NOW ALLOWS MEMBERS TO WORK IN URANIUM MINES PRODUCING YELLOW CAKE TO FILL EXISTING CONTRACTS, A HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT DECISION CULMINATING LITERALLY YEARS OF INTERNAL DEBATE; AND (C) MELBOURNE HAS ALREADY SEEN TWO VERY SUCCESSFUL OTHER NPW VISITS, USS TRUXTUN AND USS LONG BEACH (NOV 1976) AS WELL AS SEVERAL OTHER CONVENTIONAL USN AND USCG SHIPS IN THE PAST 18 MONTHS. WE BELIEVE THAT ABOVE FACTORS COUPLED WITH THE RECORD OF THIS VISIT SUPPORT OUR VIEW THAT FUTURE NPW VISITS WILL BECOME MORE AND MORE ROUTINE.

6. FINALLY, THE POST COMMENDS COMMANDER DAUGHTERS, HIS OFFICERS AND MEN FOR THEIR CONSTANT EFFORTS TO PRESENT A MOST FAVORABLE PUBLIC IMAGE OF THE SHIP AND THE U.S. NAVY IN GENERAL.
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